

THIRTY YEAR CAR FRANCHISE GETS MORE HARD POUNDING—FISHER REPLIES

Slick Walter Fisher, who gets \$150 a day from the city, but who argues as though he were hired by the traction lines, withstood another day of pounding yesterday at the 30-20 franchise bill upon which the local transportation committee is having public hearings. And he came through in the same tricky, successful way, shedding questions like a duck sheds water and handing back two to the witnesses' one.

Tomaz Deuther, representing the Northwest Side Commercial Men's ass'n, again appeared before the committee and asked that a hearing be given Saturday to a lawyer whom the association would hire to point out the defects in Fisher's \$300,000,000 plans to tie up Chicago body and soul for at least 30 years, and probably longer, quashing all hope of public ownership in the meantime.

Fisher tried hard to find out just what the attorney was going to contend, and, failing in this, he tried to get the name of the lawyer. Why he wanted this he didn't say.

Morton L. Johnson, president of the Chicago Public Ownership league, voiced the sentiments of those he represented when he asked in the name of organized labor that no action be taken in this legislature.

"Tell us what you are for and against," asked Fisher.

"We are against this so-called 30-year bill. We are for municipal ownership. We don't want any such franchise given away by the city.

"The city could finance the same scheme on $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent bonds. The traction interests are asking $6\frac{1}{2}$. The difference between these two figures every year is about \$6,000,000.

"In 30 years it would amount to almost enough to take over the property.

"Your subway and traction commission has it all figured out where the people live and how many pass through the loop. What do they know about conditions ten years from now? Nothing. We are planning some big things, such as zoning and redistricting, which may change the entire character of parts of the city and overthrow the figures of the engineers.

"The present franchise of the traction lines has ten years to run. Why should we change and make it thirty? The service is bad enough without giving them another hold on us.

"We advocate better use of present police and city ordinance powers. We want to wait at least for another year. Meanwhile we can have hearings on this. We object to the attempt to rush it into the legislature.

"We feel that we have not had a sufficiently long time to present our side of the question, and if the matter is to be called up in the council Monday night we will not have had a chance to consider it.

"I want to protest against the habit that transportation committee aldermen have of staying away from these meetings. I think every member should be here to get the facts. It looks as though some of them had decided on their votes without even seeing what the matter is all about.

"There is no reason why we can't wait. The traction lines' present franchise has ten years more to run. Why not wait at least a part of this ten years and meanwhile we can attempt to change the state constitution so as to permit public ownership.

"The transportation committee is asking us to take the choice of two evils, a long franchise or rotten service. There is no necessity in either of these. If the laws we have now to regulate car service were enforced there would be no need of a change."